

Outdoor Recreation Resources

Outdoor Recreation Lands and Waters

Nevada is endowed with a larger per capita acreage of publicly owned lands available for recreation than nearly any other state. Public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the vast majority of which is designated for multiple uses, dominate the state. The BLM claims that more than 99 percent of the 47,867,000 acres it manages are open to recreation (Table 5-1). With over 5 million acres, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the largest in the lower 48 states. Nearly all of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands are also open to multiple recreation uses. The National Park Service (NPS) manages another 775,000 acres, including Great Basin National Park, Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and a small portion of Death Valley National Monument. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) also administer substantial holdings that offer certain recreation opportunities, such as Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

Recreation Lands

The State of Nevada owns about four tenths of one percent (0.4 percent) of the state or about 274,000 acres. Much of the state-owned land is comprised of state park units administered by the [Nevada Division of State Parks](#) (NDSP) and wildlife management areas administered by the [Nevada Division of Wildlife](#) (NDOW) (Table 5-2).

The [Nevada State Park System](#) is comprised of 24 separate units with approximately 132,878 total acres of land and water. However, only 77,343 of the total state park acres are actually owned by the state. The [Bureau of Reclamation](#) controls 49,495 acres, leasing lands surrounding both [Lahontan](#) and [Rye Patch](#) to the state. Another 5,280 acres are leased from the Bureau of Land Management under the Recreation and Public Purposes program, while

Table 5-1. State and Federal Public Outdoor Recreation Land Area by County (Acres)

County	Federal Public Land (Multiple Use)*	Nevada Division of Wildlife	Nevada Division of State Parks	Total
Carson City	43,347	0	3,140	46,487
Churchill	2,144,414	18,179	8,213	2,170,806
Clark	4,952,434	17,657	40,843	5,010,934
Douglas	254,451	0	1,329	255,780
Elko	7,852,284	8,000	4,044	7,864,328
Esmeralda	2,247,863	0	0	2,247,863
Eureka	2,162,840	0	0	2,162,840
Humboldt	4,963,872	0	0	4,963,872
Lander	3,336,706	0	0	3,336,706
Lincoln	6,426,556	1,337	6,933	6,434,816
Lyon	864,178	30,202	26,922	921,302
Mineral	1,943,946	0	280	1,944,226
Nye	8,528,805	14,814	1,155	8,544,774
Pershing	2,929,481	16,905	20,241	2,966,627
Storey	12,795	0	0	12,795
Washoe	2,892,806	2,382	17,856	2,913,044
White Pine	5,297,529	6,426	1,922	5,305,877
NEVADA	56,854,287	115,902	132,878	57,103,057

* "Multiple use" applies to the federal policy to manage land and resources for a combination of uses, including outdoor recreation, commodity, and ecological functions and values, that will best meet the needs of the people. Multiple use land in Nevada generally excludes land withdrawn by U.S. Departments of Defense and Energy, though a limited range of activities are permitted on specified military reservations.

240 more acres are administered by State Parks under a management agreement with BLM. Finally, 520 acres encompassing the Ichthyosaur fossil sites near Berlin are controlled by State Parks under an USFS special use permit.

Five of the state park units are designated state historic parks or sites. Each of these emphasizes cultural features; including Mormon Station, Belmont Courthouse, Fort Churchill, Ward Charcoal Ovens and the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort each emphasize cultural features. However, most of Nevada's state parks have significant cultural features complementing natural and recreational features. Dayton State Park has the Rock Point Stamp Mill. Spring Mountain Ranch, Floyd Lamb and Spring Valley all have historic ranch features. Lake Tahoe has numerous, though mostly obscured, archeological and cultural sites. Berlin is arguably the best-preserved ghost town in the state. Cathedral Gorge, Kershaw-Ryan, Beaver Dam and Valley of Fire State Parks all have remnant Civilian Conservation Corps constructed cultural features. In addition, Valley of Fire is famous for its petroglyphs.

Trails offer the means for increasingly popular recreation pursuits, both motorized and non-motorized. Nevada's State Parks offer very limited opportunities for motorized trail use. However, the [state parks' trail inventory](#) includes 118 miles of single-track trails primarily devoted to hiking, equestrian and/or mountain bike usage. Another 159 miles of un-maintained dirt roads within the various state parks offer additional multi-use trail opportunities, including some motorized access for licensed vehicles. ATV's, dirt bikes and other unlicensed motorized vehicles are not permitted.

The vast majority of trail mileage in Nevada occurs on federally owned lands, primarily BLM public lands and the national forests. The BLM estimates that 39,311,000 acres (85 percent of BLM land) are open to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use. The BLM's inventory includes 56 trails totaling 622 miles. Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest land contain a total of 1,283 trail miles, including 718.5 in designated wilderness areas.

Table 5-2. Nevada State Park System Land and Waters

State Park Units	Acres		
	Land	Water	Total
Region 2	18,074	4,403	22,477
Dayton SP	152	0	152
Lake Tahoe NV SP ⁵	13,805	465	14,270
Mormon Station SHP	2	0	2
Washoe Lake SP ¹	4,115	3,938	8,053
Region 3	33,069	23,590	56,659
Belmont Courthouse SHS	2	0	2
Berlin-Ichthyosaur SP	1,153	0	1,153
Fort Churchill SHP	4,461	0	4,461
Lahontan SRA ²	18,422	12,100	30,522
Rye Patch SRA	8,751	11,490	20,241
Walker Lake SRA	280	0	280
Region 4	2,394	1,650	4,044
South Fork SRA ³	2,274	1,650	3,924
Wild Horse SRA	120	0	120
Region 5	8,708	147	8,855
Beaver Dam SP	2,378	15	2,393
Cathedral Gorge SP	1,633	0	1,633
Cave Lake SP	1,208	32	1,240
Echo Canyon SP	1,045	35	1,080
Kershaw-Ryan SP	264	0	264
Spring Valley SP ⁶	1,498	65	1,563
Ward Charcoal Ovens SHS	682	0	682
Region 6	40,832	11	40,843
Big Bend SRA	2,343	0	2,343
Floyd Lamb SP ⁵	2,347	10	2,357
Old LV Mormon Fort SHP	3	0	3
Spring Mtn. Ranch SP ⁴	839	1	840
Valley of Fire SP	35,300	0	35,300
State Total	103,077	29,801	132,878

¹ State-owned acreage includes Washoe Lake.

² Lahontan state-owned and BOR managed lands are estimates only.

³ State-owned acreage includes South Fork Reservoir.

⁴ 240 acres within Red Rock Canyon NCA are managed by NDSP under management agreement with BLM

⁵ Acreage includes 28 acres contiguous to Van Sickle Unit not yet officially assigned to Division of State Parks.

Recreation Waters

The major recreation lakes and reservoirs of the state are itemized in Table 5-3. Most significant in terms of total acreage and recreation opportunities are [Lake Tahoe](#), Lake Mead and Lake Mohave. The latter two are both part of the [Lake Mead National Recreation Area](#), which sustains one of the highest visitation rates of any national park unit in the nation, over 8 million per year. Pyramid Lake, the largest entirely within Nevada, is also significant.

Total water acreage in the state parks approximates 29,801, of which 23,590 can be attributed to the two major Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs in the state, Lahontan and Rye Patch. Seven park units are situated adjacent to or encompass major water bodies. In addition to Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, Lahontan State Recreation Area and Rye Patch SRA, there are Washoe Lake State Park and Walker Lake, South Fork and Wild Horse State Recreation Areas. Seven others incorporate smaller bodies of water, while several lay adjacent to perennial rivers or streams. Eleven have boat ramps with a total of 28 lanes. The acreages of surface water bodies within the State Park System are shown in Table 5-2.

Table 5-3. Important Recreation Lakes And Reservoirs In Nevada

Name	County	Surface Acres	Volume, Acre-Ft.
Wild Horse Reservoir	Elko	2,830	73,500
Wilson Sink Reservoir	Elko	828	10,469
South Fork Reservoir	Elko	1,650	40,000
Lower Pitt-Taylor Reservoir	Pershing	2,570	22,200
Upper Pitt-Taylor Reservoir	Pershing	2,070	24,200
Rye Patch Reservoir	Pershing	11,400	171,000
Lake Tahoe	Carson, Douglas, Washoe	36,812	125,000,000
Pyramid Lake	Washoe	108,000	25,000,000
Washoe Lake	Washoe	6,100	37,000
Lahontan Reservoir	Churchill, Lyon	14,800	322,000
Topaz Lake	Douglas	1,205	126,000
Walker Lake	Mineral	38,800	2,990,000
Weber Reservoir	Mineral	950	13,000
Ruby Marsh	Elko	9,000	13,000
Lake Mead	Clark	90,000	29,700,000
Lake Mohave	Clark	14,000	1,820,000

Outdoor Recreation Use

Based on a statewide survey of citizens 16 years of age and older in Nevada conducted in early 2001, 84 percent of Nevadans participated in outdoor recreational activities in the year 2000, and most report engaging in several. The top ten most popular activities, based on the percentage of the population participating, were pleasure driving (55%), picnicking (48%), walking without a dog (41%), swimming in a pool (40%), wildlife viewing (39%), swimming in a lake or stream (39%), hiking (38%), walking with a dog (34%), lake fishing (34%), and motor-boating (33%). Least popular were water sailing, cross country skiing, roller/in-line hockey, snow shoeing, wind surfing, and hang gliding/parasailing, all with less than 5% participating (Nevada Division of State Parks, 2002).

When similar types of outdoor recreational activities are grouped, water related activities are the most popular (82%), followed by swimming (60%), walking (55%), fishing (42%), camping (39%), bicycling (31%), off-road motorized recreation (29%), winter related activities (28%), and hunting (13%). Water resources remain a major attraction for outdoor activities. Of the individual water related activities, 39 percent said swimming in a lake or stream was an activity in which they participated, demonstrating the importance of meeting water quality standards established for contact recreation uses.

Changes in the state's socio-demographic characteristics are reflected in the survey results. Comparing 2001 and 1986 data shows that the percentage of the population participating increased slightly in golfing and motor boating while decreasing significantly in every other comparable activity except downhill skiing,

which decreased only from 19% to 17%. While difficult to fully explain, an aging population and limited expansion of recreation opportunities with a simultaneous explosion in population are possible explanations.

Survey data specific to wildlife-associated recreation activity is collected and reported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service every five years. The state-by-state survey presents data on participation in and expenditures for hunting, fishing, and wildlife-watching activities, such as observing, feeding, and photographing wildlife (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1998). According to the 1996 FWS survey data for Nevada, the number of residents and nonresidents anglers increased since 1991, but fewer were hunting and wildlife watching (Table 5-4). The 1996 estimates indicate that the number of Nevadans and visitors choosing to go wildlife watching approximates the combined total of those choosing fishing and hunting combined.

Table 5-4. Wildlife-Associated Outdoor Recreation Activity Statistics for Nevada, 1996

Measure of Outdoor Recreation Activity	Fishing		Hunting		Wildlife Watching	
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996
	(Thousands)					
Total Participants In State	171	224	57	52	451	271
Total Days In State	1,218	1,976	565	650	2,940	1,394
Total In State Trip-Related Expenditures (\$)	47,036	73,244	21,527	20,303	84,212	62,666

Source. 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation, Nevada. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998.

Notes. Participants in state include resident and nonresidents. The wildlife-watching category includes only individuals that traveled at least one mile from home to observe, photograph, or feed wildlife.

More recent preliminary data shows that fishing and hunting participation in 2001 declined from 1996 levels, and wildlife watching increased. Among the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast states, Nevada has the lowest estimated number of residential and nonresidential hunter and anglers. Compared to Nevada, California is the only state with a smaller percentage of the resident population participating in any wildlife-associated outdoor recreation activity than Nevada (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2002).

Despite the arid climate and limited water, a large number of lakes and reservoirs are available for boating, fishing, swimming, wildlife watching, and other water recreation. In total, there are more than 200 ponds, lakes, and reservoirs that provide nearly 400,000 surface acres of sport fishing opportunity. In addition, more than 500 streams and rivers offer nearly 3,000 miles of fishable habitat (Nevada Division of Wildlife, 2001). The [1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation Survey for Nevada](#), reports that in 1996 anglers spent an average of 9 days fishing and an average of \$900 per year on fishing related expenses. In 2000, Nevada resident anglers purchased 97,912 fishing licenses and 34,029 combination licenses (for fishing and hunting). Nonresident anglers purchased 32,215 fishing licenses. Total fishing license sales increased between 1990 and 2000, from 136,385 to 164,153.

Boating activity, including use of motorized and non-motorized craft, is growing in popularity. Nearly 62,000 vessels (i.e., any watercraft used for transportation on the water) were registered with NDOW in 2000. Personal watercraft, like the use of other motorized recreation vehicles (e.g., all terrain vehicles and snowmobiles) has grown substantially. In some locations, the use of personal watercraft (i.e., jet skis) has generated controversy. Because jet skis are operated near shore, concerns are related to the significance of negative effects on water quality, fish and wildlife, habitat, shoreline vegetation, noise, and safety of other water recreationists. The most popular boating water in the state is



Anglers at Wild Horse Reservoir show off their catch. Fishing is one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in Nevada, according to the NDSP Citizen's Survey. Fishers in Nevada spent over \$73 million on trip-related expenses during 1996 (Table 5-4). Photo courtesy of NDSP.

Lake Mead, located in Clark County where over half the boats in the state are registered. Other popular boating waters include Lake Tahoe, Lahontan Reservoir, Pyramid Lake, Wildhorse Reservoir, and the Ruby Marshes.

With public “multiple use” land abundant, Nevada offers ample open space for hunting. Almost 30,000 big game tags were sold by NDOW in 2000 to hunt deer, pronghorn antelope, Desert and California big horn sheep, elk, and mountain goat. Deer hunters spent a total of nearly 112,000 days in the field and over 11,000 days were spent in pursuit of other big game animals in 2000. Upland game and waterfowl hunters numbered 143,000 in 1999 (NDOW, 2001). The 1996 National Survey reported that total in state hunting expenditures amounted to nearly \$95 million in 1995. Of that total, \$20 million were spent on trip related expenses, which provides vital income for rural Nevada businesses (U.S. Fish and Wildlife, 1998).



Boating on the Middle Carson River. The growing popularity of canoeing and kayaking is an example of changes in public recreation activities in Nevada. Access was made possible with the acquisition of riverfront ranch properties next to Fort Churchill State Historic Park. A portion of the state administered land is leased for agricultural uses.

State Parks and Wildlife Management Areas

The NDOW administers outdoor recreation activities on 11 state Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's). Primary activities are hunting, fishing and wildlife watching. Activities are subject to regulations established by the [State Board of Wildlife Commissioners](#). Natural and artificial lakes, reservoirs, streams, springs, and wetlands are central to ten of the WMA's. Public use data is limited because most of the WMA's are unmanned. The average annual number of “use days” for Mason Valley WMA is 47,000; for Overton, 5,300; for Kirch, 22,000; and, for Key Pittman WMA, 1,800. Each is popular for fishing, waterfowl and upland game bird hunting, as well as substantial “nonconsumptive” uses. Nonconsumptive activities include wildlife watching, photography, hiking, education, and scientific study (Nevada Division of Wildlife, 2001).

Table 5-5. State Wildlife Management Areas Administered by NDOW		
Wildlife Management Area	County	Land Area (Acres)
Overton	Clark	17,657
W. E. Kirch	Nye	14,814
Key Pittman	Lincoln	1,337
Mason Valley	Lyon	13,735
Humboldt	Pershing Churchill	37,140
Fernley	Lyon	13,019
Scripps	Washoe	2,382
Alkali Lake	Lyon	3,448
Bruneau WMA	Elko	4,771
Franklin Lake	Elko	3,229
Steptoe Valley	White Pine	6,426
Total		117,959
Source: Nevada Division of Wildlife, 2001.		

For Nevada's state parks, visitation has grown with development of the park system, but has lagged behind the rate of population growth. The earliest record of visitation occurred in 1960 when 155,887 people reportedly used the parks. By 1971, the annual visitation had grown to 1 million. The largest and most steady increases occurred during the early to mid-1970's when development of new facilities and the acquisition of new park acreage were at their peak. By 1976, over 2 million visitors were recreating at the state parks annually. Visitation increased 100 percent in only 5 years. However, 19 years passed before visitation exceeded the 3-million threshold, despite rapid population growth.

The fact that state park visitation increases have not kept pace with population growth is probably attributable to the state's failure to increase capacity of park facilities commensurate with population increases. Severe capital improvements budget limitations since the early 1980's have constrained the NDSP's ability to

increase facility capacity within the state park system. Overnight camping, in particular, has seen virtually no growth since the early 1980's. Only two new campgrounds, South Fork State Recreation Area and Cave Lake State Park, with 41 campsites have been completed since that time. Another 14 campsites at Ward Charcoal Ovens have been partially completed. The entire state park system currently has only 321 improved campsites (i.e., with modern restrooms but no hook-ups) and 805 primitive campsites for a total of 1,126. Of the nine state parks in close proximity to the western and southern Nevada urban population centers, only three provide camping facilities.

The additions of new state park sites or expansions of existing ones have been very limited in the past decade. Only two new park sites and one major addition took place during the 1990's. The three-acre Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort was incorporated into the Nevada State Park System in 1991. Fort Churchill was expanded by several thousand acres in 1994 with the acquisition of adjacent Carson River ranches using the Question 5 Park and Wildlife Bond of 1990. Finally, the 2,343-acre Big Bend of the Colorado State Recreation Area was acquired from the Colorado River Commission in 1994. Nevertheless, State Parks' visitation has steadily increased over the years, though at a much slower pace than the state's population growth. Without additional investment in the state's park system capital improvement program, the trend is likely to continue.

Table 5-6 presents visitation data for Nevada State Parks for the period 1996 to 2000. Though the overall visitation in 2000 shows an increase of six percent over 1996,

Table 5-6. State Park Visitation, 1996-2000					
Park Name	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Region 2					
Dayton	91,116	77,965	77,382	76,327	73,845
Lake Tahoe	894,446	892,760	752,864	946,737	1,072,858
Mormon Station	74,067	95,659	40,211	83,077	108,883
Washoe Lake	230,699	179,891	148,606	175,000	187,122
Region 3					
Belmont Courthouse	1,944	2,270	1,996	2,122	2,736
Berlin-Ichthyosaur	17,499	19,245	15,638	14,605	10,704
Fort Churchill	76,547	74,180	83,267	86,742	90,010
Lahontan	430,573	412,433	384,253	383,493	481,148
Rye Patch	84,756	82,611	79,908	82,239	94,188
Walker Lake	39,780	36,459	30,670	32,310	33,652
Region 4					
South Fork	199,839	100,668	82,192	112,111	105,386
Wild Horse	22,765	21,696	20,530	21,023	28,724
Region 5					
Beaver Dam	6,702	7,357	5,849	7,650	8,072
Cathedral Gorge	41,346	59,433	57,914	66,025	57,167
Cave Lake	146,666	97,540	66,034	69,733	92,548
Echo Canyon	52,058	49,250	45,526	45,584	49,762
Kershaw-Ryan	NA	8,349	18,319	19,725	20,689
Spring Valley	124,107	118,673	106,197	111,914	119,959
Ward Charcoal	2,715	1,505	3,787	11,055	11,977
Region 6					
Big Bend	10,351	9,648	34,503	53,185	57,493
Floyd Lamb	178,199	190,489	155,876	204,032	140,942
Old LV Mormon Fort	4,214	6,821	4,509	3,545	9,581
Spring Mtn. Ranch	232,825	210,441	186,622	193,523	195,709
Valley of Fire	291,744	418,127	438,485	427,286	419,093
TOTAL	3,254,958	3,173,470	2,841,138	3,229,043	3,472,248
Source: Nevada Division of State Parks, 2001.					

visitation at certain parks has actually declined (Nevada Division of State Parks, 2001). Dayton, Washoe Lake, South Fork, Floyd Lamb, and Spring Mountain Ranch State Parks are located close to urbanized areas. Local residents who tend to resist paying entrance or other user fees traditionally have dominated use of these parks. However, with enhanced enforcement of fee collections and with the collection of fees in locations where none were previously charged, local visitation during recent years has dropped. At the same time, fee revenues have substantially increased.

Other factors come into play for individual parks. The 1996 visitation figures for Cave Lake, for example, are suspect. The visitor counting procedures in 1996 are believed to be faulty. With the institution of revised procedures, the visitation level fell dramatically in 1997. Floyd Lamb State Park suffers from noticeably deteriorated facilities and this is believed to be the main reason for the dramatic decline in use during 2000. Spring Mountain Ranch, on the other hand, has been impacted by the introduction of fee collections by the BLM in the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (NCA). Spring Mountain Ranch lies entirely within the NCA, but has been relegated to a secondary destination status. Many visitors first pay an entrance fee at the BLM Visitor Center. Those that do drive to Spring Ranch after touring the 13-mile scenic loop are reluctant to pay a second fee for entrance to the state park. Despite capacity and maintenance shortfalls, visitation at State Parks has steadily increased statewide over the long-term, though at a slower rate than the state's population growth. This difficult set of circumstances is not anticipated to change soon.

Federal Public Land

Recreationists on [Nevada BLM](#) and [Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest](#) (HTNF) administered public lands are engaging in a wider variety of activities. Table 5-7 presents visitor day data grouped by type of activity. The HTNF recorded a total of 2,953,000 visitor days in 1996. The Forest contains 85 developed



Recreational and transportation use of motorized vehicles and watercraft on public land and water bodies is on the rise. OHV, snowmobile, and boat activities constituted 11 percent of total visitor days on BLM administered land in 2000 and 3.5 percent on HTNF administered land in 1996 (excludes OHV transportation use with other activities) (Table 5-7). Relatively little is known about the nature and scale of environmental effects from additional OHV recreation and transportation. Agencies are trying to address related issues, including air and water quality, wildlife, habitat, noxious and invasive weeds, and recreational use conflicts (i.e., motorized vs. non-motorized use). Photos show ATV touring at Valley of Fire S.P.; a busy day at Lahontan S.R.A.; and dune buggies at Berlin-Ichthyosaur S.P. Photos courtesy of NDSP.

recreation sites within its 5.8 million acres (Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 2001). HTNF developed sites have a total capacity of 7,460 persons at one time. Nevada BLM manages about 180 developed recreation sites statewide and 33 designated dispersed recreation use areas. The BLM areas had a total of over 5 million visits or an estimated 4.1 million visitor days in 2000 (Nevada BLM, 2001).

The combined 7 million visitor days on HTNF and BLM recreation areas indicates that a Nevada's uniquely vast and stark lands present a range of attractions to a diverse set of

outdoorsman, as well as presenting an array of opportunities for outdoor recreation-related tourism enterprises. Public recreation lands are widely distributed in the state, and both urban and rural communities stand to gain by growth in outdoor recreation and by enhanced resource conditions. However, the large number of visitors and uses (Table 5-7) indicates that the act of balancing resource protection with growing demands of the recreating public can only become more challenging.

Table 5-7. USFS & BLM Visitor Day Counts By Recreation Activity Type In Nevada

Activity	USFS Visitor Days	BLM Visitor Days	Activity	USFS Visitor Days	BLM Visitor Days
Archery	NA	26,218	Pack Trips	NA	6,116
Backpacking	NA	34,805	Photography	NA	76,608
Bicycling	27,500	71,604	Picnicking	216,500	43,141
Boating	3,100	20,842	Racing-Auto Track	NA	25,541
Cabins	36,400	NA	Racing-Horse Endurance	NA	93
Camping	633,700	1,153,213	Racing-OHV Cars/ Trucks/ Buggies	NA	5,586
Camping-Organizational	65,800	NA	Rockhounding/ Mineral Collection	NA	31,654
Caving	NA	2,801	Row/ Float/ Raft	300	21,312
Climbing-Mountain/Rock	63,100	33,557	Skiing-Cross Country/ Snowshoeing	30,600	16,698
Dog Trails	NA	1,044	Skiing-Downhill	59,100	NA
Driving for Pleasure	421,500	288,874	Snow Play-General	77,100	4,786
Environmental Education	28,000	31,221	Snowmobiling	39,100	14,490
Fishing	89,400	171,171	Social Gathering/ Festival/ Concert	NA	221,263
Gather Non-Commercial Products	121,300	86,852	Specialized Sport/ Event (Non-Motor)	NA	36,023
Hang-Gliding/ Parasailing	NA	77	Spectator Sport	19,500	760
Hiking/ Walking/ Running	326,100	151,542	Sports/Games	17,100	NA
Horseback Riding	96,700	131,209	Staging/ Comfort Stop	NA	833
Hunting-Big Game	144,800	440,417	Swimming/ Water Play	1,400	48,358
Hunting-Small Game	16,900	60,302	Target Practice	NA	38,144
Hunting-Upland Bird	33,000	109,575	Touring	14,900	NA
Hunting-Waterfowl	2,200	22,179	Trapping	NA	10,591
Ice Skating	0	891	Viewing-Cultural Sites	18,100	83,800
Interpretive Programs	4,100	179	Viewing-Other	NA	92,541
Land/ Sand Sailing	NA	2,747	Viewing-Scenery	192,800	NA
Miscellaneous/Other	24,400	NA	Viewing-Wildlife	NA	57,982
Nature Study	75,700	14,675	Viewing-Interpretive Exhibit	49,300	8,541
OHV (Specialized Land Craft)	5,100	292,811	Water Skiing	0	163
OHV-Motorcycle	57,200	115,892	Wilderness Use	331,800	NA
Total Visitor Days				2,953,600	4,109,722
Sources: Nevada BLM and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, 2001.					
Note: HTNF visitor day estimates are for 1996 and NBLM estimates are for 2000.					

The increasing uses noted in outdoor recreation activity have come with an environmental price. Concern has grown over the proliferation of sport utility vehicles, personal all terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, mountain bikes, personal watercraft, and snowmobiles. These and other motorized and mechanized modes of

transportation on land and water opens the door to a new legion of outdoor recreation participants during all seasons. Vehicles are not merely transportation to recreation areas, but have become the recreation themselves. The consequences of irresponsible and unmanaged dispersed recreational vehicle use can be costly resource damage. One type of impact is the expanding spider web of trails, roads, and vehicle tracks, which exacerbate slope and channel erosion, water quality degradation, habitat damage, and wildlife disturbance. Increased regulation, enforcement, and restrictions may become necessary to deal with these problems on public lands. Trail-rider and off highway vehicle associations have implemented programs in an attempt to raise public awareness about proper use of motorized vehicles in Nevada's wildlands and watersheds.

Other problems are related to the larger numbers of recreationists converging on limited developed resources, resulting in overuse. Some campsites and picnic areas, for example, have become trampled with heavy foot traffic. Soil compaction affects the health of surrounding trees and shrubs. Campers are notorious for hanging lanterns on trees, not realizing that this will cause "lantern scars" where the cambium layer is killed due to the heat. Trails have been constructed through riparian areas, poorly drained areas, or on steep slopes that are very sensitive to even moderate traffic, regardless of whether travel is on foot, horseback, mountain bikes, or motorized vehicles. This problem is difficult to control. Insufficient trail maintenance of problem areas, for example where fallen trees, boulders, or other obstacles are not removed in time, leads to trampling of the area and proliferation of new trail sections. Lack of sanitary facilities commensurate with the level of use is a widespread problem. While the environment can generally sustain light human usage without the benefit of sanitary facilities, more intensive use can be detrimental to the environment and human health.

The intensity of outdoor recreation on public and private lands will continue to increase as the population of Nevada and surrounding states grow. Both rural and urban communities are advertising nearby outdoor recreation attractions to boost local tourism revenues. Many of the state's most scenic, wildest, and water-associated recreation resources include unique and sensitive habitats and species. [Anticipating that the state's special places will receive more visitors](#), decision makers can take proactive steps to provide the funding and technical assistance that agencies will need for enhanced resource monitoring, research, and management. Everyone benefits by positive actions taken to ensure that outdoor recreation activities are compatible with the sensitivity and carrying capacity of Nevada's most enjoyable and precious natural resources.

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Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. 2001. Personal communication between Nevada Division of State Parks and HTNF outdoor recreation program.

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